

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update

Transcript of Public Comments from Land Use Element Workshop

May 4, 2004

1. Concurrency Standards

Question: How do concurrency requirements apply to Land Use and Transportation Elements? What language will give language to Comprehensive Plan?

Answer: Concurrency standards are in the Transportation element in the form of Level of Service Standards. These measures establish how much congestion we are willing to accept. To date, no LOS thresholds have been tripped.

Comment: The lack of any thresholds being exceeded may be a problem.

2. Concerns regarding cell towers

- Concerned with cell tower proliferation.
- DPD is not tracking cell projects.
- Wireless Industry is in a build-up phase and constructing many cell towers.
- There is no set policy in neighborhood zones for placement of cell towers/antennas.
- If protecting neighborhoods from proliferation of antennas is not stated as a priority in the Comprehensive Plan, they can be built anywhere.
- There are clusters of unnecessary cell tower density in the south end.
- Concerned about health issues, quality of neighborhoods, and property values.
- Keep antennas in commercial/industrial zones.
- Develop a master plan for cell towers so neighborhoods can see where they go.
- Currently industry does not have to document the need for new towers.
- Add P&R placement cell towers.
- Where is line-what type of cell tower controls belong in comp plan versus Land Use Code?

3. High density development outside Urban Centers/Urban Villages

Question: Why do proposed amendments possibility of high density rezones outside Urban Villages?

Question: Why shouldn't we allow high-density development in one of the highest density places in Washington?

Answer: To accommodate growth, we direct it to Urban Centers and Urban Villages – areas outside Urban Villages and Urban Centers should not be developed with higher intensity buildings. The City is trying to provide services more efficiently – transit, schools, and other public facilities.

Question: If you focus growth certain areas will you exceed capacity?

Answer: All neighborhoods have adequate zoning capacity for estimated growth.

Question: If there is market pressure for high density development outside Urban Centers/Urban Villages, why not accommodate this type of development?

Answer: This is a plan about managing growth. City is prepared to take quite a bit of growth but not just anywhere.

Question: If we're going to discuss upzone/rezone outside Urban Centers/Urban Villages can we make it harder to "under build" inside urban villages?

Answer: Under building is an issue - we have limited tools to discourage under building.

Question: In 10-20-30 years will more upzoning in those same places happen?

4. Single Family Housing

Language Protect character of single family zones is a goal, but allowing other housing types in the same neighborhoods is too – goals seem inconsistent.

5. Cumulative Impacts

- Do not seeing language re: cumulative impacts – ex: 5 story bulky buildings on Elliot Bay.
- Can habitat be pulled up to the front of shoreline section– if not, exempt Elliot Bay from Puget Sound.

6. Growth Monitoring

- Greatly improved language regarding housing and quality of life issues in new monitoring language (L52- UV 43). What is the long-term plan for how language is used: benchmarks, indicators, measures, etc?
- Question: Can language related to accountability be added? Taking out the word “annually” has removed way to keep city accountable.
- Answer: L52 not intended as enforcement – only to call out places where extreme growth taking place

7. Auto-Oriented Development

- Discussion of auto-oriented commercial zone: Like saying this is where Wal-Mart will be & that’s where we’ll do our shopping. However Comprehensive Plan suggests less auto-oriented development.
- Aurora avenue N an example – auto oriented with pedestrian, bus stops. There should be limits on what we allow.
- Important because local, all business impacted by big box retail.
- Also big box development hurts economy – not often family wage jobs.

8. Miscellaneous Comments

- Where is language to protect, retain family wage jobs.
- Favor proposal to designate SLU an Urban Center
 - New centers criteria
 - New guideline
- Change of target to estimate is strange – does GMA specific capacity estimate v growth target.
- High traffic on alki-overflow tools to address issues
- Retain language on tree protection.
- Suggest measuring density by number of people rather than units.
- Language regarding annexation of incorporated areas should be strengthened.
- Thank you staff for BINMIC proposal.